

Georgeanne Paul

Helena Montana | Friday, April 12 2024

Georgeanne Paul (born December 30, 1949) died on April 12, 2024 in Helena Montana, surrounded by her loving family. She lived a rich and colorful life that was also marked by hardship. In spite of all that she carried, there was always a sparkle in her eye and a joke or kind word at the ready. That she was finally able to embrace the softness of rest is a blessing for those who loved her. She died with her family present and with the knowledge that she had done well and lived a good life.

Georgeanne grew up in Alton, Illinois where she was a popular and loyal friend and a favorite babysitter. She had a keen eye for fashion and had an elegant style that was matched by her easy demeanor. She was a member of her school choir and French club and developed a love for animals that she would carry through her life.

After a couple of false starts, caused by the heady distractions of the 1970s, Georgeanne completed college, receiving her Bachelor of Science degree in 1981 from SIU-Edwardsville. Neither of her parents had gone to college and it was a priority for them — especially her mother — to see her achieve that milestone. Her lifelong curiosity about people drove her to study psychology and then go on to work in social services. Her love of the west drew her to embrace and settle in the community of Helena, Montana.

Most of her career was spent working as a vocational consultant. She was adept at her job and was a hard worker. She drove all over the state to meet with injured workers and help them find a path back to work. She loved Montana so she loved the time to admire the beauty of the state through the windshield. She always kept an eye to the sky and would point out birds of prey and often surprised her kids with her encyclopedic knowledge of wildflowers and songbirds. She felt grounded and awed by the pristine natural beauty in her chosen home state.

Georgeanne was a valued member of her community. She was idealistic about the capacity of humans to be kind to one another and she put that into practice in the ways she showed up for those around her. For many years she would finish her day job and then spend several hours working at the Florence Crittenton Home in Helena, finding meaning in mentoring young women with unexpected pregnancies. She also found peace in her own Buddhist practice and was an active member of her meditation group.

She had a rich inner life that she often kept to herself. She was smarter than most people knew, noticeable when she would choose the perfect word to describe someone, make an insightful observation, or land the perfect joke. For the most part, she was content to be the steady companion and let other people shine their light in her presence.

She was a supporter of the arts and a believer in fighting for justice. More than anything, she was a loyal champion of what was important to the people that she loved. This was especially true for her daughters — she came to every event, drove them to every activity, and gave them every opportunity. She was always a phone call away and ready to help navigate any pickle, a perennial cheerleader for their success.

Georgeanne's life was marked by very good luck and very bad luck; the obstacles that she encountered were harder than many will have to endure in their lifetime. Through her remarkable resilience, grit, and a little good fortune, she survived multiple serious car accidents, a bout with pancreatic cancer, a diagnosis of dementia, and other personal hardships. In the end, a simple accident — a fall hitting her head — was what hastened her last breath.

While her final years were marked by a slowing down and a dimming of her sparkle, her dry wit and playful spirit remained until the very end. Her need for cognitive care increased in later years and, while she was always a gracious patient, she was not-so-secretly delighted to be waited on hand-and-foot by her daughters. Her cravings and whims were many – often painstaking and seemingly unrealistic to satisfy – but she knew the exact approach to seal the deal every time. She remembered her early years fondly and appreciated hearing from old friends. And she could still land zingers that left the room in stitches and in absolute incredulity.

Her legacy lives in her daughters who are smart, accomplished, honest women with a strong sense of self-worth and integrity. And also in all of the people who were helped by her, who felt listened to, who laughed at one of her dry jokes, or felt the sunshine of her warm personality.

She was preceded in death by her parents Jean Floss Paul and John P. Paul Sr, step-mom Nancy Paul and step-brother Brad Hazelwonder. She is survived by her siblings and

their families who were dear to her: John P. Paul Jr, Laura Krawczak (Chris), Kimberly Hartnett, and Holly (Ruth) Cocco (Brian); daughters Allison Dale-Riddle (Matt), Mia Crivello, and their dads Jeff Dale and Bill Crivello, Julie Wilson Bridges (John); grandkids Eli, Jesse, Ashley, Braden, Alexa; great grandkids; and countless other beloved family members and friends who made imprints on her life and were also changed by having known and loved her.

A small celebration of life will be held at The Myrna Loy in Helena, Montana on Saturday, May 11 from 11am - 1pm. In lieu of flowers, please consider leaving a fond memory of Georgeanne on the following website, or donate to Wild Montana (<https://wildmontana.org>) and help to protect the resources she so admired. Simple Cremation Montana assisted the family.

To plant a beautiful memorial tree in memory of Georgeanne Paul, please visit our [Tree Store](#).